



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.96/846/Part V/6
2 August 1995

Original: ENGLISH

HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Forty-sixth session

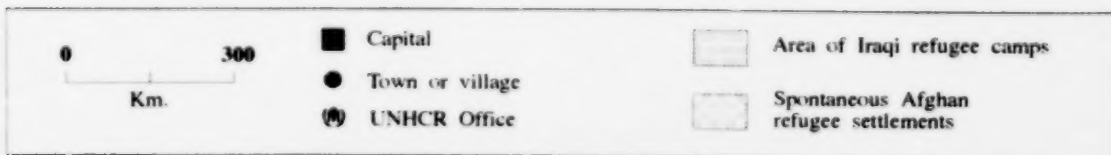
UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS:
REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND
BUDGET FOR 1996

PART V. SOUTH WEST ASIA, NORTH AFRICA
AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Section 6 - Islamic Republic of Iran

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



V.6 ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

1. Beneficiary population

1. At 31 December 1994, 1,623,000 Afghans (1,225,000 permanent card holders and 398,000 temporarily registered refugees) and 118,000 Iraqi refugees (Kurds, Arabs and a new influx of Marsh Arabs) were reported by the Government to be in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Government also provided information concerning the presence in the Islamic Republic of Iran of some 495,000 expellees from Iraq, comprising Iraqis of Iranian origin, Faili Kurds and Shia Arabs. Their status has yet to be determined but some of them may be of concern to UNHCR. In addition, there are 68,000 persons of undetermined nationalities. A precise breakdown on the numbers and nationalities of this group is not available, but the majority appear to be Tajiks, Azeris and Bosnians. The overall total thus comes to 2,304,000.

2. Developments in 1994 and 1995

(a) General Programmes

(i) Afghan refugees

2. For the past year, the Government has been confronted with a declining domestic economy, inflated prices of fuel and basic commodities, rising unemployment and a devalued rial. Health and education subsidies have been withdrawn from both Iranian citizens and refugees. The Government, which has been supporting refugees largely from its own resources has stated that it can no longer sustain the same level of social welfare, nor can it allow refugee employment beyond March 1995. It has strongly advocated the repatriation of Afghans, the majority of whom are scattered among the urban population throughout the country.

3. Thus, the 1994 Afghan repatriation was planned for 300,000 returnees, and by the end of the year 226,669 returned, of whom 121,402 had repatriated under the UNHCR assistance programme. Most of the Afghans who repatriated were from the city of Mashhad in Khorasan Province, which the Government has proclaimed to be a refugee free zone. According to the Government, refugees with permanent identification cards can stay in the country pending their voluntary repatriation but they should be relocated to areas designated by the Government including newly created camps. The Government expects the international community to increase its assistance to the refugees.

4. During 1994 and 1995, UNHCR continued to supplement and, to the extent possible, compensate for the Government's assistance programme through international procurement of vehicles and medical supplies and construction and improvement of various communal facilities such as schools, health clinics and water systems in areas hosting large numbers of refugees. With the difficulty of targeting assistance to refugees mixed among the urban population, this implementing modality whereby the local population in areas with high concentration of refugees also benefit will remain viable for the foreseeable future.

5. In 1995, however, in order to cope with the withdrawal of health subsidies that were previously extended to refugees, the Ministry of Health agreed to UNHCR providing individual assistance to those refugees in need of special medical care. UNHCR has established medical screening and referral units, employing Iranian doctors as consultants in Tehran, Mashhad, Zahedan, Shiraz, Kerman and Esfahan to screen refugees and to refer cases to the local hospitals. An increase in the 1995 care and maintenance budget has been made to cover the cost for the treatment of concerned refugees.

(ii) Iraqi refugees

6. As in the Afghan programme, UNHCR has been complementing the Government's assistance towards some 118,000 Iraqi refugees (Kurds and Arabs) situated in western Iran. Unlike the Afghans, Iraqi refugees have access to jobs and to various services. However, their current socio-economic status may change, as it did for Afghan refugees, if the national economy continues to deteriorate.

7. During 1994, a small influx of Marsh Arabs from Iraq continued into the border military zone of Himmet, Khuzestan Province. Since the first influx in June 1993, 9,500 refugees have been accommodated in camps. By the end of June 1995, the last group of refugees remaining at the border were settled in camps. Due to insecurity UNHCR has limited access to the border and thus finds it difficult to make its own assessment.

(iii) Project implementation

8. Because of unforeseen delays in the implementation of various activities, the 1994 budget could not be fully disbursed within that project year. Every effort is therefore being made in 1995 to improve the rate of implementation of projects. In this regard, UNHCR recently convened a programme management training session for provincial government staff.

(iv) UNHCR/IFAD South Khorasan Rangeland Rehabilitation Project

9. This project was proposed in 1989 to rehabilitate the rangelands of southern Khorasan Province that had been severely over-cut and over-grazed by large concentrations of Afghan refugees. The project eventually started in 1992 with funding of \$ 6 million out of a total budget of \$ 26 million. An area of 138,600 hectares is going through the restoration process. The project ended in June 1995.

(b) Special Programmes

10. Afghan repatriation: The Afghan repatriation programme is covered under Regional Special Programmes (Part V/13 of this document).

11. **Iraqi repatriation:** A total of 2,290 Iraqi Kurds repatriated with UNHCR assistance between September and December 1994, when the operation was suspended for the winter. Inside Northern Iraq, Iraqi Kurds have been assisted by UNHCR Iraq. The repatriation operation is scheduled to resume in mid-1995 if stability in Northern Iraq can be improved and sustained. The cost of this operation would be covered from the balance available from contributions to the emergency programme for the Persian Gulf crisis.

3. 1996 country programmes

(a) Objectives

12. Taking into account the planned repatriation of 500,000 Afghans in 1995, the 1996 planning figures are 1,100,000 Afghan and 120,000 Iraqi refugees. UNHCR will assist the Government by complementing their refugee programme, but will also introduce targeted assistance wherever possible. Since the Iranian Government is expected to actively promote repatriation, UNHCR will intensify its effort in Afghanistan and engage in various reconstruction activities aimed at the successful reintegration of the returnees.

13. For the remaining Afghan refugee caseload that cannot return in the foreseeable future, it is the responsibility of the Government, UNHCR and the international community to formulate a strategy that would assure their safety and dignity in the country, and promote their self-sufficiency.

(b) Proposed budget for 1996

(i) General Programmes

14. **Care and maintenance:** The Government policy to terminate health subsidies and apply greater restrictions on access to employment means that vulnerable refugees will likely require additional attention. UNHCR is reviewing 1996 budgetary requirements taking into consideration the implementation capacity and possible consequences of the new government policies. UNHCR will continue to provide medical screening and referral as well as legal services for these refugees.

15. **Voluntary repatriation:** The Iraqi Kurd repatriation operation will continue into 1996. It is expected that up to 30,000 Iraqi Kurds and 1,000 Shia Arabs will repatriate voluntarily to their places of origin in Iraq. UNHCR and WFP will provide a repatriation package grant upon their departure and a small budgetary provision has been made.

a. Local settlement

16. **Afghan refugees:** Under the current circumstances in which refugees must either repatriate or be sent to new camps, it is difficult to plan future activities. UNHCR will focus primarily on activities in the sectors of health, education and logistics that will directly benefit or have a positive effect on refugees. When feasible, UNHCR will assist targeted groups. Selective construction and repair of facilities will be undertaken to benefit only those refugees who are

obliged to remain for the foreseeable future. However, it will not assist the Government in funding the construction of new camps when repatriation is still considered to be the option of priority, and such costly structures will therefore soon become obsolete. The budget is established at \$ 4,551,500 and will be reviewed during the last quarter of 1995 taking into account the refugee situation and the subsequent revised planning of the 1996 activities.

17. **Iraqi refugees:** Some 120,000 Iraqi Kurd and Arab refugees will be assisted. UNHCR will provide funding, mainly in the sectors of health, sanitation, education and water. After a feasibility study, UNHCR will consider income-generation activities for women. Construction activities will be limited to renovation and maintenance of existing facilities in the camps. The total budget has been established at \$ 3,733,000. The Iraqi Kurd repatriation operation will continue into 1996.

18. Sectoral requirements for the assistance to Afghan and Iraqi refugees are summarized below (in dollars):

Afghan and Iraqi local settlement (General Programmes)

	<u>Initial 1995</u>	<u>Revised 1995</u>	<u>Proposed 1996</u>
Food	0	69,075	0
Transport	841,000	744,700	530,000
Domestic needs	0	454,000	162,000
Water	832,396	1,116,397	423,000
Sanitation	1,647,000	2,174,000	1,075,420
Health	3,128,713	2,809,586	2,821,336
Shelter	300,000	2,019,540	607,000
Education	408,000	1,239,430	1,049,209
Crop production	0	0	85,000
Forestry	0	0	250,000
Income generation	154,795	479,962	506,838
Legal assistance	194,396	236,326	112,000
Agency operational support	<u>100,000</u>	<u>1,117,584</u>	<u>662,697</u>
<u>Total</u>	7,606,300	12,460,600	8,284,500

(ii) **Special Programmes**

19. **Afghan repatriation:** Part V/13 refers.

(c) **Implementing partners**

20. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the main implementing partner of UNHCR. Both at the central and provincial levels, the Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior administers the overall refugee programme. Other Ministries work with UNHCR in the health,

education and water sectors under BAFIA policy guidelines. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNHCR cooperate at the international community level. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) works with UNHCR in providing transportation assistance to repatriating Afghans and Iraqis. UNHCR has no non-governmental implementing partners, but the International Consortium for Refugees in Iran (ICRI) provides guidance to non-governmental organizations interested in working with refugees. WFP provides the refugees in the camps with monthly food rations in accordance with UNHCR's Memorandum of Understanding with WFP.

(d) **Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs**

(i) **1994 expenditure (all sources of funds)**

21. The 1994 expenditure was lower than the revised estimates because several posts previously created under the Afghan Repatriation Programme for staffing the Border Exit Stations (BESs) and In-Country Transit Centres (ICTCs) remained vacant due to the lower than expected repatriation of Afghans through several BESs and ICTCs. This resulted in substantial savings under salaries and common staff costs and correspondingly under all other budget chapters. Expenditure under staff travel and general operating expenses in Mashhad and Zahedan was, however, higher than expected since much of the repatriation took place from these places and because of a need to strengthen security measures.

(ii) **Revised 1995 requirements (all sources of funds)**

22. The revised 1995 requirements are slightly lower than initial estimates. Additional costs under salaries and common staff costs resulting from the creation of new posts were more than offset by the discontinuation of others. In Ahwaz, one local post of Administrative Assistant was created under the Afghan Repatriation programme to provide the capacity required for the day-to-day functioning of this Sub-Office. In Kermanshah, one post of Field Officer outposted to Field Office Orumieh was created to assist local authorities more directly in responding to the needs of Iraqi refugees. In Zahedan, one post of Community Services Assistant was created together with three posts of Repatriation Assistant, while one National Officer post was discontinued as from 31 December 1994. In Mashhad, one post of Senior Administrative Clerk was discontinued together with two posts of Field Clerk. All seven posts previously created for the Mirjaveh Border Exit Station were discontinued at the end of 1994. Corresponding reductions in non-staff costs, travel and general operating expenses were offset by additional needs for the replacement of vehicles and the upgrading of computer equipment.

(iii) **Initial 1996 requirements (all sources of funds)**

23. The 1996 requirements are not significantly different from the revised 1995 requirements since no major changes in staffing are expected at this stage. All previously approved time limited posts have been extended until 31 December 1996. Salaries and common staff costs are lower as a result of the net reduction of posts from previous years. Non-staff costs and general operating expenses remain at 1995 level, while needs for the purchase of new vehicles and equipment are lower.

Changes in requirements will depend upon the operational demands placed on the Office of the Chief of Mission with respect to ongoing programmes of assistance Afghan and Iraqi refugees, including their voluntary repatriation and the implementation capacity of UNHCR's operational partners.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1994	1995	1996
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1994 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION
		SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE
		PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION

GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)

440.8	614.0	1,437.4	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	483.2
-	-	-	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	218.1
7,745.0	7,606.3	12,460.6	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	8,284.5
114.0 a/	-	-	RESETTLEMENT	-
1,788.3	1,927.6	1,876.1	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	1,936.9
10,088.1	10,147.9	15,774.1	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	10,922.7
419.6	482.2	472.7	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	453.4
10,507.7	10,630.1	16,246.8	TOTAL (1)	11,376.1

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)

3,920.0	10,960.7	13,531.3	AFGHANISTAN REPATRIATION PROGRAMME	13,560.1
1,734.6	2,381.3	2,308.4	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	2,158.3
9.5	44.4	27.4	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	25.6
-	-	219.7	OTHER TRUST FUNDS	-
143.0	-	123.2	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	-
100.2	96.0	72.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer See Overview Tables (Part II)	72.0
5,907.3	13,482.4	16,282.0	TOTAL (2)	15,816.0

16,415.0	24,112.5	32,528.8	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	27,192.1
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